

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 200726

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP, UR

SUBJECT: CODEL RIBICOFF/BELLMON: INITIAL PLANNING

1. SENATORS RIBICOFF AND BELLMON, AS DELEGATION LEADERS, HAVE MET WITH DAS LUERS TO SET PLANNING IN MOTION FOR TRAVEL TO USSR IN NOVEMBER BY 15 SENATORS (LISTED BELOW) NAMED FOR SENATE'S RETURN OF PONOMAREV VISIT TO U.S. IN JANUARY 1978. (THE COMPLEMENTING HOUSE DELEGATION IS EXPECTED TO TRAVEL IN SPRING 1979.) RIBICOFF SAID AT THIS TIME HE FAVORS GOING AHEAD WITH VISIT AND HOPES IT CAN MAKE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO REDUCING U.S.-SOVIET TENSIONS. THIS MESSAGE SKETCHES INITIAL SENATE THINKING AND STATUS OF PLANNING FOR VISIT, WHICH DEPARTMENT EXPECTS
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WILL PROCEED ASSUMING NO MAJOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS ADVERSELY AFFECTING U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS OCCUR IN THE INTERIM.

2. THE TWO LEADERS INTEND TO CALL THE DELEGATION MEMBERS TOGETHER SOON TO ELICIT THEIR SUGGESTIONS AND SETTLE ON INITIAL U.S. ITINERARY AND AGENDA PROPOSALS FOR DETAILED DISCUSSION WITH SOVIETS. ALSO AS PRELIMINARY STEP

RIBICOFF SUGGESTED DEPARTMENT APPROACH SOVIET EMBASSY NOW TO ESTABLISH CONTACT AND REVIEW GENERAL OUTLINE OF VISIT. LUERS PLANS TO DO THIS WEEK OF AUGUST 7-11.

3. DELEGATION WILL PROBABLY DEPART WASHINGTON NOVEMBER 9, WITH REST-STOP IN LONDON BEFORE PROCEEDING TO USSR. (ONLY STOPOVERS ENVISIONED OTHER THAN USSR WOULD BE FOR REST AND FOR REFUELLING.) AT THIS TIME RIBICOFF FORESEES LEAVING USSR ABOUT NOVEMBER 20 IN ORDER TO RETURN TO U.S. IN TIME FOR THANKSGIVING, BUT HE WANTS DELEGATION TO CONSIDER OPTION OF LONGER STAY. PRINCIPAL CITIES UNDER CONSIDERATION ARE MOSCOW, TBILISI (OR YEREVAN), TASHKENT AND LENINGRAD, WITH NOVOSIBIRSK THE LIKELY ADDITIONAL CANDIDATE IF EXTENDED STAY IS DESIRED BY FULL DELEGATION. HE WOULD PREFER THAT GROUP VISIT COUNTRY BEFORE GOING TO MOSCOW FOR THE OFFICIAL PARLIAMENTARY TALKS, BUT WILL DEFER TO SOVIETS IF THEY PRESS FOR MOSCOW AS FIRST STOP.

4. RIBICOFF SUGGESTED DELEGATION'S TALKS WITH SOVIETS MIGHT FOCUS ON THOSE MAIN CONCERNS OF EACH SIDE ABOUT THE OTHER WHICH GIVE RISE TO TENSIONS, AND ON WHAT STEPS MIGHT BE TAKEN TO REDUCE THESE TENSIONS. HE WILL PROPOSE THAT INDIVIDUAL SENATORS IN DELEGATION BE ASSIGNED SPECIFIC TOPICS FOR STUDY. HE ALSO PLANS TO INVITE THE SECRETARY, MARSHALL SHULMAN, DR. BRZEZINSKI AND KISSINGER TO BRIEF THE DELEGATION AT AN EARLY DATE TO PERMIT
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SUBSEQUENT STUDY OF, AND REFLECTION ON, THE ISSUES BY DELEGATION MEMBERS AND THEIR WIVES. HE WILL ENCOURAGE WIVES TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN ALL SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF TRIP.

5. FULL LIST OF DELEGATION FOLLOWS (LIST HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN CONGRESSIONAL RECORD):

RIBICOFF (D., CONNECTICUT)
BENTSEN (D., TEXAS)
BURDICK (D., NORTH DAKOTA)
DECONCINI (D., ARIZONA)
DURKIN (D., NEW HAMPSHIRE)
EAGLETON (D., MISSOURI)
GLENN (D., OHIO)
NUNN (D., GEORGIA)
STEVENSON (D., ILLINOIS)

BELLMON (R., OKLAHOMA)
CHAFEE (R., RHODE ISLAND)
JAVITS (R., NEW YORK)
LAXALT (R., NEVADA)

PACKWOOD (R., OREGON)
SCHWEIKER (R., PENNSYLVANIA).
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